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ABSTRACT

The language arts component of the California State "Model Curriculum Guides" series, this document sets guidelines for the elementary and middle school English language arts curriculum. The guide suggests a learning sequence--core, integrated, and across the curriculum--and delineates concepts, skills, and activities appropriate for learners in kindergarten through grade 3, grades 3 through 6, and grades 6 through 8. In keeping with a process approach philosophy, the content and model lessons of the guide are structured to help teachers lead discussions, frame questions, and design activities that contain multiple levels of learning. Twenty-two guidelines are presented, each followed by representative enabling activities with suggested texts for the three grade groups. General guidelines emphasize the study of significant literary works, basing instruction on students' experiences, and developing an interrelated program that is integrated across the curriculum. A summary of the 22 guidelines concludes the guide. (JG)

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English-Language Arts

MODEL CURRICULUM GUIDE

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE EIGHT

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FOREWORD

"... the first principles which are instilled take the deepest root ...."

Abigail Adams, Letter to John Adams, August 14, 1776

The importance of the elementary school experience cannot be overstated. The first connections that our children make with formal learning lay the foundation on which their future education will be built. If through their day-to-day, school experiences students find that learning is important, interesting, and meaningful to their lives—and if we help students not only to want to learn but also to know that they can learn —we have put in place important building blocks for a solid academic foundation. Yet, to value learning and to want to learn are not the only ingredients of the foundation. The content of the curriculum—what we teach our children—ultimately determines how well they are prepared for the challenges of further education and for productive adult life.

California's attention to the content of the elementary school curriculum is part of the state's comprehensive curriculum improvement efforts. With the Hughes-Hart Educational Reform Act of 1983 (Senate Bill 813), California reinstituted high school graduation requirements, which increase for many schools the number of courses required for graduation. The legislation also mandated publication of the *Model Curriculum Standards, Grades Nine Through Twelve*, which is intended to help high schools improve the quality of academic coursework. The *Model Curriculum Guides, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight*, are aligned with the state's *Model Curriculum Standards*, as well as with our frameworks, handbooks, and assessment programs. Together, the *Guides* and the *Standards* are intended to engage each student from kindergarten through grade twelve in interesting, disciplined academic study. Their overarching purpose is to ensure that all California schools are able to address the state's most critical educational needs to:

- Prepare youth for productive adult employment in an economy increasingly dependent on highly skilled, highly literate employees.
- Graduate informed, thoughtful citizens who understand the shared values and ethical principles essential for a healthy, functioning democracy.
- Produce culturally literate adults who have learned not only basic skills but also a common body of concepts and central works of history, literature, English–language arts, science, mathematics, social science, foreign languages, and the arts, and through this study possess a strong sense of a shared tradition and cultural heritage.

The task of developing a curricular model appropriate for all students is enormous. Students in many of our schools come from widely diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. They also develop at very different paces academically, physically, and emotionally. To prepare so diverse a student population for the complex world of their future, educational leaders in California and nationally urge the adoption of a rigorous, integrated core curriculum that begins in kindergarten and

builds from grade to grade through high school, as described here:

- A core curriculum of study validates each student's individuality and unique strengths while engaging all students in a meaningful investigation of the common knowledge, values, and skills needed for productive adult life. Students study the beliefs which form the ethical and moral bonds of our nation. They develop an understanding of civic responsibility in a pluralistic, democratic society and learn the technological literacy needed for our increasingly complex society. A common core curriculum ensures each student a sound educational foundation and develops fully the student's academic, ethical, and political potentials.

- In an integrated curriculum, teachers incorporate through the lessons they teach the knowledge and skills from two or more disciplines. In integrated units of study, teachers emphasize the rich connections among content areas, teach students the interrelatedness of knowledge and skills, and foster a holistic view of learning. Through the integration teachers also extend instructional time in subjects structured as integrated lessons. In a science lab in which students record their observations in concise, declarative sentences and read about one another's discoveries, for example, the students learn reading and writing along with science concepts.

At the beginning of this foreword, I quoted from a letter Abigail Adams wrote to her husband. Now I close with a most appropriate quote from a letter she wrote to her son, John Quincy Adams: "Learning is not obtained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence." As we build new curricula for our elementary schools, we need to keep both of Mrs. Adams's ideas clearly in mind: Those first principles that we teach our children lay a foundation that must not be permitted to assemble by chance. This guide and the other materials we have produced to support our educational reform efforts in California will help ensure that the education of our children will not be left to chance but will be pursued with the diligence and insight of an Abigail Adams.

Bill Honig

Superintendent of Public Instruction

PREFACE

The *Model Curriculum Guides* set forth the essential learnings for elementary and middle school English–language arts, mathematics, and science curricula. And guides for social science, history, fine arts, physical education, and foreign language are being prepared.

Although the *Guides* are not mandatory, they are intended as evocative models of curriculum content. Individual schools will probably modify and expand the content, as appropriate, for their particular student populations. For each subject, the *Guides* suggest a learning sequence, delineating concepts, skills, and activities appropriate for learners in kindergarten through grade three, grades three through six, and grades six through eight. The sequences are suggestive. Teachers' judgments about a particular student's readiness for more advanced instruction will ultimately determine when new concepts and skills are introduced.

Sequencing essential learnings for various grade levels is useful in organizing so large a body of information. Yet, the overarching message of the *Guides* is that learning is not linear. It is a process that involves a continuous overlay of concepts and skills so that students' understandings are ever-broadened and ever-deepened. The content and model lessons of the *Guides* are structured to help teachers lead discussions, frame questions, and design activities that contain multiple levels of learning. Examples indicate how knowledge at one level can be reinforced and expanded as students advance through the curriculum. The organization of material is intended to help teachers move each student quickly from skill acquisition to higher-order learning while, at all times, fully engaging the student in rigorous academic study.

The shift of emphasis from mastering basic skills to understanding thoroughly the content of the curriculum is intentional. Research indicates that children will learn more—and more effectively—if teachers focus lessons on content and the connections among subject areas. Students learn to apply skills by reading, writing, and discussing curriculum content. The essential learnings emphasize central concepts, patterns, and relationships among subject areas and reinforce inquiry and creative thinking.

Whenever possible, lessons include background information about the works and ideas of individuals who have shaped the discipline. Such contextual knowledge helps students understand the way in which people discover and apply information under particular circumstances to advanced fields of knowledge. This fuller picture of academic content develops students' cultural and technological literacy—their ability to see both the content of the discipline and the broader context out of which facts and concepts evolve.

The *Model Curriculum Guides, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight,* will be successful if they help elementary and middle school communities shape an integrated, active core curriculum that prepares students for the challenges of secondary school and beyond. The building blocks of an academic foundation are in place in many of our elementary schools. Yet, so important is the foundation

—not only to children and their families but also to our future communities and the nation as a whole—that we must make every effort to ensure that, in every school and for every child, the elementary curriculum is the best that we can provide.

"The beginning is the most important part of the work."

Plato, The Republic

JAMES R. SMITH
Deputy Superintendent
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Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig and the members of his staff are most grateful for the efforts and contributions of all advisory committee members and also other educators who served as reactors to earlier drafts of this document. The members of the advisory committee included the following:

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In early 1985 the *Model Curriculum Standards: English–Language Arts, Grades Nine Through Twelve* was published, pursuant to state legislation. Logic dictates that a similar document for kindergarten through grade eight is needed, even though it is not mandated by law. The purpose of this document is to help those responsible for the English–language arts education at the kindergarten through grade eight levels prepare students for the curriculum they will encounter at the upper grade levels. The curriculum planners are urged to compare existing programs, which are often fragmented, overly skills oriented, joyless, and outdated, with the program advocated in this guide. They are further urged to consider making changes as appropriate. An even more important purpose, however, is to help educators prepare students at these grade levels in three major areas. These include the preparation of all students to:

1. Function as informed and effective citizens in a democratic society.

2. Function effectively in the world of work.

3. Realize personal fulfillment.

The committee which helped to prepare this guide (see Acknowledgments) did so in the light of recent indicators which demonstrate a rise in our nation in illiteracy, semiliteracy, and aliteracy (that is, able, but nonreaders). Put in simpler language, the members of the committee are concerned with the growing numbers of people in California whose command of written English does not serve to meet the demands of everyday life; another substantial number who, although able to read, have great difficulty understanding what they encounter in print; and yet another substantial number of students and adults who can read and understand what they read but who simply do not read. The committee believes that unless these problems are corrected while affected students are still young, they tend not to be corrected at all, which is to the detriment of our society. This need, of course, makes the guide particularly pertinent.

The limits of my language stand for the limits of my world.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Realizing that the causes of these phenomena in our free and open society are complex and in many ways not school-connected, the committee decided to focus its recommendations on those areas amenable to educational policymaking. Most of these are reflected in the guidelines and the representative enabling activities which follow. However, some of the areas are broad in nature and difficult to fit into such a format. Among these are the following:

1. The language arts program should be addressed to meet the needs of all students regardless of their levels of ability, socioeconomic status, or their familiarity, experience, and skill with the English language.

2. Students whose dominant language is not English should be given opportunities to experience the same broad language arts curriculum provided for their English-speaking peers. However, methods and materials may need to be

...We can only raise our reading and writing skills significantly by consciously redefining and extending our cultural literacy.

E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

varied as appropriate; e.g., literature printed in a language other than English.

3. Educators should serve as English–language arts models for their students in such ways as frequently engaging in the same writing activities they have assigned to students, willingly sharing their writing with students, pursuing their own reading while in view of the students, using the spoken language correctly and effectively, and using libraries as a lifelong learning resource.

4. The language arts curriculum should be designed to help students gain knowledge and acquire skills through a planned developmental program which provides them with an articulated, systematic progression from kindergarten through grade eight.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring....

Alexander Pope

5. An adequate amount of time should be allocated and spent on the language arts program in general and each of its components in particular; this is particularly pertinent in the areas of listening and speaking, which are often neglected in the curriculum.

6. Parents should be solicited and invited to assist with the language arts program by engaging in such activities as reading aloud to their youngsters, responding to writing produced by them, encouraging them to complete their homework and assisting them with it, controlling the use of television, and providing a suitable environment for home study.

7. The school staff with the help of parents should solicit and welcome incentive programs sponsored by business and industry to encourage students to achieve at higher levels.

8. The atmosphere of the language arts classroom should be such that the students have ample opportunities to discuss, listen, read, write, and also to experience literature in a setting which fosters active and not merely passive participation. Classroom management techniques which will help teachers establish such a setting include the arrangement of furniture to encourage discussion and small-group work; the development and maintenance of a classroom library; and the development and use of listening, viewing, reading, and writing centers. None of these arrangements, however, will necessarily lead to such a renaissance of the language arts program without the willing and active participation of the teacher.

9. While students at the primary level should be encouraged to engage in the reading and writing of narration, by grade three they should be encouraged to expand from it and to begin to explore the various kinds of expository writing; such a broadening of their experiences with various modes of discourse should increase in each subsequent grade level.

10. Beginning in the primary grades the instructional materials used for the English–language arts program should be oriented less toward textbooks and basal readers and based more on literature. Furthermore, there should be a marked decrease in the use of work sheets that require minimal response from the students and an increase in activities which require students to self-generate questions and to compose sentences and paragraphs.

11. In order that teachers might be better prepared to teach effectively in the program advocated in this guide, both preservice and in-service educational programs need to be improved and updated in the light of all that is known about the effective teaching of English–language arts. Clearly, this guide alone cannot effect extensive change in language arts programs. It is intended merely as one tool to help effect this. The guide is only a start. The knowledge and creativity of classroom teachers will determine the degree of its impact. Appropriate preservice and in-service educational programs, then, are central to the improvement of language arts programs.

The more specific recommendations in this document are structured around 22 boxed statements which are referred to as guidelines. These guidelines are categorized in accordance with five major groupings, and each grouping opens with a brief introduction. The groupings are as follows:

I. The English–language arts program emphasizes the reading and the study of significant literary works.

II. The English–language arts program includes classroom instruction based on students' experiences.

III. English–language arts instruction is based on an interrelated program in which listening, speaking, reading, writing, and the study of literature are taught in concert and are mutually reinforcing.

IV. English–language arts are an integral part of the entire curriculum.

V. Evaluation of the English-language arts program includes a broad range of assessment methods.

Each guideline is focused on one aspect of an effective language arts program and, to make the ideas encompassed in each guideline more explicit and concrete, each one is followed by three representative enabling activities. These have been prepared with three grade spans in mind: kindergarten through grade three, grades three through six, and grades six through eight. These grade spans were selected as a convenient way for illustrating the relatively abstract ideas in the guidelines; at local levels a more complete array of suggested activities should be developed. These should reflect a learning continuum for the continuous progress of each student, including those whose primary language is other than English. Indeed, it should be emphasized that these activities are only examples of what needs to be

developed in greater depth and at greater length locally. To have added more of these activities to this document would have made it discouragingly long and seemingly prescriptive. However, local educational policymakers need to realize that the activities listed are a distillation of the best thinking of the profession and should be considered accordingly.

Those responsible for the preparation of this guide were cognizant of several other state publications with which this guide is aligned. Included among these are the aforementioned *Standards;* the *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight;* the *Handbook for Planning an Effective Writing Program;* the *English–Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve;* and the *Handbook for Planning an Effective Literature Program.* A far more complete discussion of the major ideas in this guide than is possible here can be found in these companion publications. In addition, a handbook designed to meet the needs of students whose dominant language is not English may be developed later.

The committee expects, then, that readers will look on this guide as a model with which they might compare existing programs. The committee also expects that the guide will serve as a motivator for educators to develop a more extensive array of locally appropriate representative enabling activities, which then become the backbone of a new local program. The degree of impact the guide will have is entirely dependent on the degree to which these expectations are realized. The committee commends this guide to you and urges that you give it careful consideration.

The English–language arts program emphasizes the reading and the study of significant literary works.

Teachers use literature as a base for integrating instruction in the language arts and as a means for helping students improve their skills in thinking, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They also use it as a profoundly humanizing component of the curriculum and as a means for helping students become culturally literate; that is, more fully aware of their cultural heritage as well as the heritage of others.

Students have experience with all types and genre of literature and grow in their appreciation and understanding of its aesthetic value. They become familiar with characters, places, and events, and learn idioms and oft-quoted lines which help create the fabric of this country's heritage. Through related language experiences, they grow further as their store of knowledge of commonly shared literary and historical references increases. They become independent readers, learners, and communicators, who appreciate and enjoy language. This process is facilitated by school and public libraries which should be considered as extensions of the classroom and rich sources of materials and expertise for the support of a literature-based English–language arts program.

For all students, literature opens windows on the world. They learn that people the world over are alike in some ways, but different in others. They learn that some problems or conflicts in life, and the solutions for them, are universal, but others are shaped by a culture or by individual experience. Students grow as they encounter literature produced by people of all ages from cultures the world over. Students with a primary language other than English read works of recognized quality in their primary language until they are able to read, listen to, and understand such works in English. These might include works that have been translated from English and those that were originally written in the students' primary language.

The readings in the literature program can be divided into three major categories, namely, the core, extended, and recreational-motivational reading programs. The core program includes works of literary merit that have been carefully selected by curriculum planners at school and district levels. These are works that are given intensive attention on a classwide basis. Teachers help students experience these literary works through close reading and through other avenues, such as hearing them read aloud in part or whole or seeing them performed on stage or screen. They then use them as motivators of classroom discussion and students' writing. The titles selected for the core list should include all genre so that students experience a representative sampling of our literary heritage in a systematic program which is articulated at all grade levels.

The extended program consists of works, selected by curriculum planners, that students are to read on their own, or in small groups to supplement the classwork carried on under the core program. Consisting of an array of works of literary merit in all genre, the list of titles in the

Literature is memorable expression in words.

Thomas Gage

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

Francis Bacon

Literature may be defined simply as the structured embodiment of the imagination in language. . . . Literature is not knowledge; it is a way of knowing.

James E. Miller, Jr.

extended program is broad enough to permit teachers to recommend titles which are appropriate to the special interests, needs, and abilities of their students. The relationship of the core and extended programs can be built around units such as themes, historical settings, types of characters, locations, curricular topics, or works of a particular author or illustrator.

The recreational–motivational program consists of titles readily available in classroom, school, and public libraries. These are works of literary merit that, on the recommendations of teachers and librarians, students read on their own for enjoyment and enlightenment.

Reading literature involves an interaction between the reader and the text. Students respond to what they have read first in personal terms, emotionally or intellectually. They express their response to what they have read through a variety of means, and as ideas are shared among students, they refine and revise their views, returning to the printed or spoken text to verify, question, or modify responses. Ultimately, each student's response to a work of literature is a blend of universal understanding and personal views.

...Reading is a transaction between a reader and a text.

Louise Rosenblatt, The Journey Itself, The Leland B. Jacobs Lecture

GUIDELINE NUMBER ONE

All students at every grade level, including students whose primary language is other than English, receive intensive, directed instruction which helps them to comprehend, respond to, and appreciate significant core works of literature and which helps them become more fully aware of values, ethics, customs, and beliefs.

The meaning constructed from the same text can vary greatly among people because of differences in the knowledge they possess.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher reads aloud to students the opening few pages of a familiar folk story which has two or more versions that have their origins in different cultures. An example of such a story might be Paul Galdone's *The Gingerbread Man.* The students individually or with help from their peers or the teacher finish reading the story. The teacher then repeats the process, reading aloud another version or versions of the same story such as *Journey Cake, Ho!* In a classwide discussion students compare and contrast the versions, noting the commonalities and differences. They discover how the versions may have been influenced by the values, customs, and beliefs of their cultural origins. As a writing exercise, they might then be encouraged to write a new ending to the story or to illustrate or describe a favorite person or character.

3–6

As they progress through the grades, the students read about characters such as those from *Aesop's Fables, Alice in Wonderland, The Hobbit, Charlotte's Web, The Wilder Family Series,* and *Ishi, Last of His Tribe.* As a result of direct instruction which focuses on character analysis, students identify lessons learned from the characters by holding mock trials for the characters, reenacting the stories through storytelling, story-theater, or readers' theater, or having one character in the story give reasons for his or her actions. They write about the characters and write new stories or episodes for them.

6–8

The teacher selects a key statement from a core work of literature that expresses a belief about life to use as the basis of a writing assignment. For example, after reading *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, the students discuss and then write about the passage, "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart," telling how their own experiences cause them to agree or disagree with Anne.

GUIDELINE NUMBER TWO

All students, individually and in small groups, read and respond in a variety of ways to literary works, selected with the help of their teacher, that extend or enhance the classroom study of core works.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher, with the help of a library media specialist, assembles a classroom library of literary works that have commonalities with the core works that are used in the classroom. Groups of students select from among these works in the classroom library and each group decides on a method for dramatizing the selected work. Methods such as readers' theater, puppetry, pantomime, or choral reading might be employed. Each group presents its selection to the entire class. Some of the selections might then be presented to other classes, parents, or to other audiences, or they might be videotaped for future showings.

3–6

The teacher and the library media specialist assemble sets of books by the same author/illustrator or on the same theme with the sets representing various reading levels. The teacher selects one of the books to read to the entire class. For the benefit of students whose primary language is not English, the teacher might select a short work, since for these students such a reading is primarily an energy-demanding listening exercise. After the students have heard the story and reacted to it, the teacher invites students to read other books by the same author/illustrator or on the same theme. To motivate the students, the teacher shows various titles and tells a little about each story. The students who volunteer to read and tell about these books can be assigned the various titles according to reading levels if it is appropriate or necessary. One student can also be given the responsibility of finding out about the author/ illustrator or obtaining some factual information about the theme or topic. Students whose reading ability is stronger in a language other than English select books written in that language or translated from English into that language. The small groups then share their books with the rest of the class. "Author/ illustrator/theme" groups can be an ongoing part of the class's language arts program.

Children of every age and ability ought to be doing more extended silent reading.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

6–8

Drawing on a classroom library of materials selected to extend the core program, students read novels dealing with settlers and the American Indians, such as *Edge of Two Worlds* by Weyman Jones or *The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth Speare. The class is divided into two groups, with one half sympathetic to one group of

Response based teaching of literature ultimately places a tremendous burden of responsibility on the student—it demands that the student think and decide, and those are awesome tasks.

Robert E. Probst

characters and the other half sympathetic to another group. For example, one group might be sympathetic to Indian loyalties, while the other half is sympathetic to the settlers. From these points of view, the students write entries in reading logs in response to specific events in the story. In class discussion, the students use their logs to represent the different points of view and to compare and contrast these. Each group can also research, reflect on, write about, and make an oral report about the values and beliefs of the Indians or the settlers.

GUIDELINE NUMBER THREE

In the highest civilization, the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

All students engage in independent reading programs which are tailored to their individual interests, needs, and personalities and which are supported by classroom, school, and community libraries.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

Teachers urge parents to help their children obtain public library cards, to check out books of interest to the students, and to read aloud to them from these books. Teachers also introduce their students to books in the school and classroom libraries by reading portions aloud to them and by story telling. They urge the students to choose from among these books, and to read independently. Summer reading programs sponsored by teachers and librarians are of the essence here. They present students with awards, such as book marks or notations on a posted chart, as the students complete their reading.

3–6

The teacher organizes class activities to facilitate students' participation in the selection of award-winning books through such programs as the California Young Reader Medal. One way to accomplish this is to divide the class into groups and to let each group select several titles from among those which are candidates for the award. After students in each group have read the books, they reach consensus as to those that they think are deserving of an award. After each group has reported its findings to the entire class, all students read and vote on the titles that remain in the running. To guide their decision making, the students are urged to read other books that have won prestigious awards, such as the Newbery and the Caldecott Medals.

6–8

To provide a strong, ongoing independent reading program for each student, the teacher with the help of the librarian provides state- or district-developed lists of recommended books for recreational-motivational reading. Students can use the lists in making selections for independent reading at school and at home. When possible, the lists are annotated and cross-referenced to the curriculum by local educators to provide guidance and incentives for book selection. Students maintain written learning logs in which they insert a response to each book completed. The teacher periodically reviews the learning logs, occasionally interviews students regarding books they have read, and gives appropriate credit to students for their independent reading. Periodically, students make brief oral reports to the class regarding a reading they particularly enjoyed or found provocative.

The English–language arts program includes classroom instruction based on students' experiences.

All students bring to school with them a background of experiences which can serve as a foundation on which they can build increasing proficiency with English–language arts. Everyday and special experiences, both real and imagined, provide sources for language development. Students discuss, write about, and read about their own experiences and events in the lives of others that help them understand the world in which they live. By making use of carefully planned activities, teachers enhance the students' background of experiences and facilitate their learning.

Students' responses to literature, for example, are deeply affected by their background of experiences. If the latter is narrow in some ways, their interpretation of a work may be similarly narrow. Teachers take this into consideration as they guide students through core readings, and they try to provide the students with appropriate broadening experiences. While there can be no single "correct" interpretation of a literary work, students should be expected to explain and defend their interpretation. In the process of comparing their interpretation with that of others, they can begin to realize how their own backgrounds can affect their response to a work.

The degree of students' success with the other various aspects of English–language arts is similarly affected by their background of experiences. Teachers need to develop ways to elicit students' writing and speaking which are grounded on the students' experiences. They also need to help them learn to listen critically. Students need to feel that their experiences are unique, meaningful, and of interest to others. By urging them to make use of specific and concrete details in their writing and speaking, teachers can help students move and inform their readers and listeners. By showing them ways to go beyond the words of speakers and writers, that is, to read between the lines and to listen critically in the light of their own experiences, teachers can help students become more sophisticated receivers of information. In short, teachers need to help students realize that their own backgrounds of experience are invaluable as foundations for learning.

As with a musical score, there may be more than one interpretation of a text.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

GUIDELINE NUMBER FOUR

Students draw on their past and present experiences as they listen, speak, read, and write.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher asks the students to discuss what they might do in a situation similar to that in a particular story. For example, after reading *Ira Sleeps Over* by Bernard Waber, they discuss what they would take on an overnight visit, or after reading *What Mary Jo Shared* by Janice M. Udry,

A certain extent of shared, canonical knowledge is inherently necessary to a literate democracy.

E.D. Hirsch, Jr.

they discuss or write about what they would like to share at school. After reading *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, they discuss what they would do if the heroine became a member of their class.

3–6

After the students read a story about someone whose family has moved to this country, such as *Long Way to a New World* by Joan Sandin, or *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord, students who have come from other countries, states, or areas tell the story of how they came to be where they are. Those who have always lived in the United States interview their parents and family members to determine from where their ancestors came and report to the class. Students then prepare their reports for submittal in written form with illustrations or by recording them on audiotape or videotape. They share the best of these reports with various audiences.

6–8

Students remember the death of someone they knew well, either a friend, a famous person, or a family member. They list three or four things they learned from the person or reasons they remember the person. The students can work in teams of two and then report on each other's thoughts. The students then read such books as *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *Where the Lilies Bloom* by Vera Cleaver and Bill Cleaver, or *The Yearling* by Marjorie Rawlings, and discuss and write about the experiences that characters in the books had with death and how these experiences compare and contrast with their own.

GUIDELINE NUMBER FIVE

Students participate in a variety of activities specifically designed to give them the experiences and knowledge they will need to be effective listeners, speakers, readers, and writers.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

During a science lesson on shadows, students go outside to look at shadows, or the teacher brings a flashlight or other light source into the room to illustrate how shadows are formed. The teacher then reads Robert Louis Stevenson's poem "My Shadow," Alma Flor Ada's "Mi amiga la sombrera," or Marcia Brown's "Shadow" and any other available poems or stories about shadows. The students discuss how shadows can make one feel frightened, inquisitive, or amused. Students can make shadow puppets, and as a final activity, write a story, poem, or reflective narrative about a shadow.

3–6

Before experiencing a work of literature, the students participate in real-life situations similar to those in the work. For example, to prepare for understanding the story line in *Strega Nona* by Tomie de Paola, the students will describe the size, shape, color, and taste of spaghetti and then weigh, measure, chart, or graph facts about it. They can cook the pasta and then orally or in writing describe the changes in pasta as it is cooked.

6–8

The teacher presents a variety of expressions about a city to enable the students to develop an awareness of the creative potential of their own environment. The teacher plays a jazz recording, shows a film or filmstrip or slides of a city, and presents books and poetry about the city; e.g., Nancy Larrick's *On City Streets*. Students tell how these sights and sounds remind them of their own experiences and make a list of city sights and sounds they have experienced. Students from foreign cities can share their memories of their cities. Students then write descriptive phrases about the things they have listed. For example, trash cans might be described as "wrinkled" and stop signs as "giant lollipops." Eventually, these phrases can become the bases for original poems. The same approach can be adapted for students in suburban or rural communities.

English–language arts instruction is based on an interrelated program in which listening, speaking, reading, writing, and the study of literature are taught in concert and are mutually reinforcing.

There is no substitute for a teacher who reads children good stories. It whets the appetite of children for reading, and provides a model of skillful oral reading. It is a practice that should continue through the grades.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

Listening, speaking, reading, writing, and the study of literature are not discrete subjects. They are closely linked, and students' learning in one area can significantly enhance their learning in the other areas as well. Since the study of these components is inextricably interrelated, teachers integrate their instruction of these skills and areas of knowledge. They teach them in concert in a balanced program in which each component receives time and attention, but in integrated ways. Furthermore, they constantly keep in mind that they are teaching students, not merely skills and areas of knowledge. Effective teachers teach the listener, not listening; the speaker, not speaking; the reader, not reading; and the writer, not writing.

Listening and Speaking

Early development of the knowledge required for reading comes from experience talking and learning about the world and talking and learning about written language.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

Teachers recognize that most of the information people acquire is received aurally. Accordingly, they help students develop the skills for listening critically and creatively, identifying ideas and supporting details, questioning fallacies, and qualifying statements of others. They help students grow in their love of literature and language as the students hear the richness and power of the language as literature is read aloud or performed. Students learn that literature comes from an oral tradition and that much great literature continues that tradition. Teachers use story-telling techniques to provide a strong oral literature program and to help students realize the importance of effective speaking and listening in the process of communicating.

Beginning in the primary grades, the students gain skill as they share experiences and objects and as they create stories orally. Later, they prepare demonstration speeches, factual reports, and oral interpretations of literature. Frequently, they participate in class discussion, discussion during small-group work, and question-and-answer sessions.

All of the above ideas are particularly pertinent to the needs of students whose dominant language is not English. Learning to listen and speak in English is their first and most pressing need in language acquisition. Thus, effective teachers emphasize it.

GUIDELINE NUMBER SIX

Students develop oral communication skills through both formal and informal speaking activities.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

Primary students memorize core works of poetry and nursery rhymes such as "Jack and Jill," "Little Miss Muffett," "Humpty Dumpty," "The King's Breakfast," by A. A. Milne, and selections from Shel Silverstein or Robert Louis Stevenson. These

can be used for choral reading, puppetry, art projects, class books, and programs for parents. Particular attention should be given to students whose primary language is other than English in order to help them understand the meaning of any works they are asked to memorize.

3–6

The teacher provides instruction on oral and interviewing skills, and then the students take home questionnaires about their names, both given and family names. The students interview their parents and family members to find out if they were named for someone special or for a special place or event. If possible, they find out where their family names came from or what they mean. The teacher provides instruction on the effective use of oral language skills appropriate in small-group situations. Working in small groups, the students put the results together in narrative form and provide illustrations, drawings, photographs, or supplementary information. The finished product of each group becomes a class book which can become part of the class or school library and which is the subject of an oral report by each group to the entire class.

6–8

The students develop oral interpretation skills by reading aloud passages from famous speeches such as Patrick Henry's "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death," Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," Chief Joseph's "I Shall Fight No More Forever," Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream," or John F. Kennedy's "Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You." They then relate the central themes of the speeches to their own lives and to contemporary life during individual oral presentations before the class.

GUIDELINE NUMBER SEVEN

Students learn in meaningful contexts the listening skills they will need to succeed academically, socially, and economically.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The students experience the sounds and rhythms of language by listening to and chanting familiar rhymes and singing familiar songs. Because of the delight of such experiences, they are motivated to participate and in the process sharpen their listening skills. Teachers might use books such as Paul Galdone's *The Little Red Hen*, Bill Martin Jr.'s *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, Maria Elena Walsh's *La vaca estudiosa*, Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, Janet Stevens's *The House That Jack Built*, and Verna Aardema's *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* and *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* to help students reinforce their listening skills.

True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

Alexander Pope

3–6

The teacher provides instruction regarding the importance and nature of good listening skills. The students then employ these skills as the teacher uses storytelling to introduce to students tall tales of America, such as stories of Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, and John Henry. The students discuss how tall tales reflect the values of Americans. They then write their

own tall tales, working cooperatively in small groups. The students then use storytelling to present their tales to the class.

6–8

The teacher provides instruction and models for taking notes during a class discussion or presentation on cultures representative of the students in the room. The students practice taking notes using an overhead projector or other means. Students compare their notes to check for completeness and accuracy. They then use these notes to prepare a written or oral presentation.

Reading

The elementary school must assume as its sublime and most solemn responsibility the task of teaching every child in it to read.

First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America
U.S. Department of Education

Teachers recognize that students who are motivated to read are more likely to achieve the necessary skills, to enjoy reading, and to engage in it on their own. Accordingly, they rely heavily on children's literature and literature for young adults in their reading program, and they frequently read aloud from such works to their students. They realize that basal readers should not be thought of as the major tool or resource in the reading program.

Reading is a fluid process rooted in the reader's growing understanding of what an entire text is all about.

Judith A. Langer

Techniques such as the language experience approach might be employed to augment the use of published materials. With this approach, teachers can help students discover the connections between their own lives and experiences, and the reading and literary experiences they have in the classroom. In other words, teachers realize that they are managers of materials and are not managed by them. They teach decoding skills as early and quickly as possible, relying on the depth and breadth of students' reading at subsequent grade levels to help the students acquire more advanced reading skills.

—Phonics ought to be conceived as a technique for getting children off to a fast start in mapping the relationship between letters and sounds.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

To help students get meaning from texts, teachers teach comprehension skills, as appropriate, at all levels. They use predictable books (see *The Reading Teacher*, February, 1983, page 498) and the three-step prediction cycle of sampling, predicting, and confirming as one way of helping students attain reading comprehension. They show students how to broaden their vocabulary through the use of context clues in their reading and through the discussion of new words before and after a reading assignment.

To help students understand the basic meaning of a text, the teacher prepares classroom activities designed to elicit from them questions regarding it. The teacher encourages them to develop their questions on the basis of their own backgrounds of experiences as these affect their interpretation of the text. In other words, rather than asking students a series of simplistic and prosaic questions about the meaning of a text, questions which have "right" and "wrong" answers, the teacher helps students to discover meaning by encouraging them to learn to ask and to try to answer on their own questions regarding what they have read. This is not to say that all such questions and answers will be equally valid. In small-group and classwide activities, students will need to justify their interpretations. The point is, however, that by explaining and probing each other's interpretations, students will be developing their critical thinking skills and will better comprehend what they read.

All of this is equally pertinent to the needs of students whose primary

language is other than English, although teaching methodology will have to be tailored to their needs. Teachers need to be trained to help these students increase their knowledge through their primary language while also helping them to acquire language skills in English.

GUIDELINE NUMBER EIGHT

Students learn and use a variety of reading comprehension strategies and, with the help of the teacher, learn to monitor and adjust their own strategies to better comprehend what they encounter in print.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher selects a predictable book such as Bill Martin's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* and, while reading it aloud to the students, provides them with the experience of the three-step cycle involving sampling, predicting, and confirming, which can lead to greater reading comprehension.

3–6

Students engage in prereading activities that set a purpose for reading, build on students' backgrounds, and ensure that essential concepts and vocabulary are understood. For example, students might view the opening of the videotape version of Armstrong Sperry's *Call It Courage*. The teacher then leads the students in a discussion of what life might be like on a South Pacific island, sharing with them pictures, foods, and artifacts to highlight the discussion. Prior to having students read the selection, the teacher stresses that the purpose of the lesson is to understand and remember the story. The teacher reviews with the students the concepts of character, setting, problem, and resolution. After the students have read the story, the teacher leads the class in a discussion of these components. It is helpful to diagram them on the chalkboard in a story map and elicit the details from the students.

Students can use the diagram to orally summarize the story. They can also follow up this activity by writing a summary of the story. Other discussions of narrative literature can focus on character analysis leading to comparing and contrasting characters or an analysis of the events of the story leading to an understanding of how the action built to a climax.

6–8

While the whole class is reading a selection from literature, social studies, or science, students work individually or in cooperative learning groups writing questions they expect to be answered in the next chapter, or writing sentences predicting events of the next chapter. The students share questions or predictions with other members of the class. The class discusses possible answers to the questions and which prediction is the most likely to occur. After they read the selection, the students verify answers to questions and the accuracy of predictions, referring to the text when appropriate to locate exact information or inferential clues.

Another approach a teacher might use to help students improve their reading

Texts are lazy machineries that ask someone to do part of their job.

Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader

Useful approaches to building background knowledge prior to a reading lesson focus on the concepts that will be central to understanding the upcoming story, concepts that children either do not possess or may not think of without prompting.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

...Four specific strategies to help students monitor their understanding and learning of textbook selections—devising questions about the text, summarizing, predicting what the author was going to say next, and resolving inconsistencies—are essential.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

comprehension is to read aloud a short literary work and then to choose a particular word or sentence that he or she believes has significant meaning, explaining how it helps to reveal what the entire text is about. The teacher then asks the students to work individually and to select from another literary work a word or a sentence which they think is particularly significant and revealing. The students do a "quick write" in which they explain the rationale of their choices. In groups of three or four, they read their papers aloud and discuss their conclusions.

GUIDELINE NUMBER NINE

Students learn decoding strategies, including phonics, in a variety of contexts.

The right maxims for phonics are: Do it early. Keep it simple. Except in cases of diagnosed individual need, phonics instruction should have been completed by the end of the second grade. Once the basic relationships have been taught, the best way to get children to refine and extend their knowledge of letter-sound correspondence is through repeated opportunities to read.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The students dictate a story based on an experience they have shared, and the teacher writes it on a story chart. The teacher and the students read the story aloud, and each student selects from the story an individual word he or she can identify. The students take turns framing their words on the story chart as the group reads the sentence in which each word appears. Individual students read aloud their framed words, and the teacher writes a word on a card or cardboard strip for each student. As the students add new words to their sight vocabulary, they keep the cards in individual envelopes or boxes. The students and the teacher use the words for building sentences and for a variety of phonic activities such as classifying words that begin or end with the same letters or words that begin or end with the same sound.

3–6

As a follow-up to a reading selection, the teacher introduces or reinforces the use of context clues, explaining that authors often provide single words or groups of words which give an idea of the meaning of a word that may be unfamiliar to the reader. The teacher then asks students to locate specific words which are new to them. For each word, the teacher reads aloud the sentence or sentences containing the clues to meaning, and asks the students to identify the word or group of words which provide meaning.

6–8

The teacher introduces the concept of prefixes, suffixes, and roots as a way of figuring out the meaning of new words. He or she then introduces the study of structural elements from Greek and Latin as incorporated in the study of mythology and a unit on the ancient world in social studies. The teacher provides a list of common prefixes such as "ex," "pre," "post," and "re," common suffixes such as "er," "ist," and "ology," and common roots such as "demo," "geo," and "hydro." The students then use the list to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading, especially in content areas.

Writing

Students learn that writing involves a process, with several recursive stages, which include prewriting, drafting, receiving responses, revising, editing, and postwriting activities, including the evaluation of a finished piece of work. Through this process, they

concentrate first on content, then on form, and finally on correctness. They are encouraged to engage in various modes or types of writing in both the expository and imaginative realms.

To prepare and motivate students to write for a variety of audiences in various modes of discourse while making use of a variety of tones and styles, the teacher should give particular attention to prewriting activities. The students should experience varying styles in the writing of others which they may wish to emulate. Through prewriting experiences, such as reading or hearing literature, going on a class field trip, viewing performances, or conducting interviews, the students can be motivated to select a topic, identify their intended audience, and decide on the mode, tone, and style they will employ in their writing.

As they proceed through the subsequent steps in the writing process, students will discover that writing is a means for clarifying thinking and a tool for learning in all subject-matter areas. They will more readily comprehend and observe the standard conventions of written English as they apply them to their own writing. They will learn that a first draft is merely that, and subsequent drafts reflect revision and, finally, editing. Most importantly, they discover that they have something to say and that they want to say it.

Students whose primary language is other than English should also experience the writing process, and they should be encouraged to write in their own language.

GUIDELINE NUMBER TEN

Students become aware that writing is a means for clarifying thinking and that it is a process which embodies several stages, including prewriting, drafting, receiving responses, revising, editing, and postwriting activities, including evaluation.

For anyone to learn something for himself, he must first re-create it for himself.

Piaget

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher presents two pieces of literature on the same theme, one through story telling and the other through reading aloud. The teacher leads the class in a discussion about the theme. The students then write or dictate a story of their own about the theme or a response to the stories. Working in small groups, the students respond to the writing accomplished by their peers. Each student revises his or her writing on the basis of the response he or she has received. Using the "read around" technique, which is described in *Practical Ideas for Teaching Writing as a Process*, the teacher leads the class in determining what they like about each piece of writing.

Research suggests that the finer points of writing, such as punctuation and subject-verb agreement, are learned best while students are engaged in extended writing that has the purpose of communicating a message to an audience.

Becoming a Nation of Readers

I don't know what I think until I see what I've said.

E. M. Forster

3–6

After reading books written by children, such as *Who Am I?* and *There Is a Sound in the Sea*, or selections from *Mexico visto por sus niños (Mexico Seen by Its Children)*, the students write about one aspect of their own lives, such as family, friends, life, games, neighborhood, or travels. They meet in groups to edit their work, giving suggestions to

The writing process does not fit into teacher-led, whole-class methods of instruction. Unfortunately, that is the only kind of teaching approach many teachers know.

Lucy McCormick Calkins

The most effective way to teach writing is to teach it as a process of brainstorming, composing, revising, and editing.

What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning
U.S. Department of Education

the author about content and correcting errors in spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. After the students revise their papers, the teacher posts rewritten works to be read by all. Progressively, the students will learn to do a preliminary editing of their own work.

6–8

After studying historical and contemporary figures who are seen as great leaders or as heroes, the students brainstorm the notion of "greatness." Using their notes, the students write a paper entitled "Prescription for Greatness." They consider what characteristics lead to greatness and use examples from the people studied to illustrate their points. Response groups critique for organization and effective use of examples. Students revise and edit their papers and collect final copies in a class anthology.

GUIDELINE NUMBER ELEVEN

Students learn the conventions of the English language, including correct usage, grammatical correctness, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, through listening, speaking, reading, and writing and through direct instruction when and if necessary.

It should be realized that there is no evidence that writing quality is the result of the accumulation by students of a series of subskills.

Edward M. White

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

As the need arises, the teacher provides direct instruction in punctuating simple sentences, providing models that are posted in the classroom. Then, as the students create stories and responses to stories they have experienced, the teacher creates sentence strips using the students' sentences, with the punctuation omitted. The teacher then provides the sentence strips and cards containing periods, question marks, and exclamation marks, and the students attach the correct punctuation to each sentence strip.

3–6

After students have participated in active "brainstorming" sessions and have completed a first draft of a piece of writing, the teacher assigns the students to small groups. The students respond to each other's writing and then revise their work on the basis of the responses. With the help of the teacher, each group then focuses on the editing of each paper produced in the group. The groups should have at hand pertinent reference works, such as dictionaries, a thesaurus, and grammar and usage guides. After hearing from their peers, the students edit their papers and prepare a final draft which they submit for evaluation.

6–8

The teacher provides models of sentences illustrating various grammatical structures, such as items in a series, compound sentences, appositives, introductory participial phrases, reflexive pronouns, and parallel structure, not necessarily naming the structure. Using a sentence-combining technique in which the students are given two or more short sentences to combine into one longer, more complex sentence, the students create new sentences following the models provided. For example, when teaching the use of punctuation of the appositive, the teacher might provide the model "The High Sierra, my favorite

vacation place, is filled with natural beauty." Then, through sentence combining, the teacher might have the students combine pairs of sentences, such as the following: "*The Sound of Music* is about a famous musical family. It is my favorite movie"; "Disneyland is filled with hundreds of exciting things to do. It is my favorite amusement park"; and "Ice hockey is a very fast and dangerous sport. It is my favorite sport to watch on television." Students write their combined sentences on the chalkboard, or the teacher duplicates them or shows them with an overhead projector, and the class discusses the style and correct punctuation of the sentences.

GUIDELINE NUMBER TWELVE

Students become fluent in handwriting and in the use of equipment, such as word processors and typewriters, through frequent use rather than through isolated penmanship and other drill-type exercises.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The students talk about different ways people can invite other people to a special event. They then dictate a group letter to parents, inviting them to come to Open House or to some other special event. Students copy the group letter in their best handwriting, sign it, and take it home. Kindergarten and other students who do not as yet have the motor skills to write well can assist in the preparation of the letter on a word processor. They sign duplicated copies which they take home.

3–6

The teacher leads a discussion about why the quality of handwriting is especially important in letter writing. He or she then has the students write to authors of books they have read, encouraging them to try to make a good impression with the quality of their handwriting. The teacher assists students during prewriting activities in formulating questions that they wish to ask the authors. The teacher might also read Beverly Cleary's *Dear Mr. Henshaw* to the class as a springboard for the writing project. The students provide self-addressed, stamped envelopes when writing to authors or illustrators to speed up the response time for replies.

6–8

The teacher introduces students to the word processor and demonstrates how it can facilitate their preparation of written drafts, particularly in terms of revising and editing. After receiving basic instruction in the use of the word processor, each student uses the equipment to compose a first draft of a paper written in response to a prompt, which is based on a piece of literature that the whole class has experienced. Students then meet in small groups where they respond to one another's writing and make suggestions for revising and editing. They then return to the word processor to revise and edit their papers. This process may be repeated more than once, and only the final draft is submitted for evaluation.

Computers provide specialized means for generating, storing, and revising texts. They also allow groups of people to have easy access to each other's work and allow teachers to examine the various stages of the students' writing in progress.

Stephen Marcus

GUIDELINE NUMBER THIRTEEN

Students, after having opportunities to build background, write in many different modes of discourse, such as story, observation, biographical sketch, poetry, dialogue, essay, and report.

Representative enabling activities:

You need to know what all the kinds of discourse are and how they relate to each other so that you can help students to practice composing and comprehending in a variety of ways and eventually to cover the whole universe of discourse.

James Moffett

K–3

The students, including those with limited-English proficiency, write or dictate dialogue to develop a story into a puppet show, play, or readers' theater presentation. The emphasis is on developing short lines of dialogue that are meaningful to them. The students perform the puppet show, the play, or readers' theater presentation for other classes and for groups of parents.

3–6

The students respond to literature in writing, both through personal reflection and narrative and through creating original stories. For example, the teacher tells the story *The Girl Who Loved the Wind* by Jane Yolen, and the students write about and discuss how they accept change in their lives, giving examples of what makes people change. Some may create a story using examples from a real happening, such as what happens to children when they are overprotected.

6–8

After hearing or reading several poems by Langston Hughes, such as "My People," "Negro," "Quiet Girl," and "As I Grow Older," or works by other major poets, students, working in cooperative learning groups, select one poem and create a similar or related poem based on the same theme. The students in these peer groups engage in read-around activities to critique each other's efforts and make recommendations for ways to improve the content, the word choice, and the mechanics of what they have written. Final products are compiled in a book for the class or school library.

English–language arts are an integral part of the entire curriculum.

No matter what subject matter is being taught, effective teachers are aware that the English–language arts are used in all areas of the curriculum and that the nature of the language arts demands on learners is in many ways unique to each area. Accordingly, such teachers determine the nature of these demands and provide instruction in the English–language arts as these are used and are pertinent in each curricular area.

A striking example of this integration is in the area of writing. There are many modes of discourse, some of which are more pertinent to certain areas of the curriculum than they are to other areas. Teachers need to be aware of this and to realize that writing is a learning tool in all curricular areas. To neglect students' writing in the area of science, for example, may not only deny them experiences with certain modes of discourse but may also inhibit their learning in that curricular area. Much the same can be said for other components of the English–language arts.

New developments in the California Assessment Program reflect this growing realization. Eliciting students' writing samples in several modes of discourse will soon become a significant part of the state's assessment program. Educators need to become aware of this and to plan programs which are based on the centrality of English–language arts in the curriculum.

GUIDELINE NUMBER FOURTEEN

Students experience a balanced program which requires them to listen, speak, read, and write frequently in all subject areas.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

In a unit about science, the teacher gives directions for a science experiment involving the growing of lima beans. Students take notes and then write their observations. Limited-English-proficient students might be paired with their English-speaking peers in performing the experiment and during the note-taking process. In small groups, the students compare their observations, and each group reports to the class.

3–6

The students read books about life during the Revolutionary War period, such as Jean Fritz's *And Then What Happened, Paul Revere? Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? Will You Sign Here, John Hancock?* Scott O'Dell's *Sarah Bishop*, and Robert Lawson's *Ben and Me*. They then discuss and write about life during this period of history and the contributions made by different kinds of people.

6–8

The students read stories about life in early California, such as Scott O'Dell's *Carlota, Island of the Blue*

No one should imagine that student writing is the sole preserve of English teachers or that only English faculty should be involved in the measurement of writing ability. More and more teachers in the schools and universities, and in all disciplines, are becoming aware that writing is not only a means of recording what has been learned but also a student's chief means of learning.

Edward M. White

Reading and writing are complementary acts that remain unfinished until completed by their reciprocal.

Robert Scholes

Dolphins, and *Zia*, or Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings*. They then discuss and write about the insights they have gained about California's history, comparing these insights with information gained in social studies.

GUIDELINE NUMBER FIFTEEN

Students respond both orally and in writing to questions which help them to acquire and use higher-order thinking skills in all subject areas.

Clear thinking becomes clear writing: one can't exist without the other.

William Zinsser

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher reads aloud selections which deal with the unfortunate consequences of a main character's attempts to be something the character is not. For example, the teacher reads Roger Duvoisin's *Veronica*, Don Freeman's *Dandelion*, or Gene Zion's *Harry, the Dirty Dog*. Students discuss why the characters wanted to be different, why and how the characters eventually decided to be themselves after all, and what lessons can be learned from these characters. The students then write or dictate their thoughts about the characters from the stories or people they have known, considering what motivates people to want to be different and what happens when people try to be different.

3–6

The teacher plays records or tapes of the musical version of a story, such as *The Nutcracker Suite*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Peter and the Wolf*, or *Hansel and Gretel*. The teacher then tells the story or reads it aloud and replays the music. At appropriate intervals, the teacher stops the music and asks students to retell the portion of the story depicted by the music just heard. The teacher then asks students to use their imagination and to write a description of a particular scene in the story, giving a number of specific and concrete details.

6–8

The students read *Journey to Topaz* by Yoshiko Uchida or *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Houston and compare the fictionalized accounts of historical events with newspapers, magazines, or social studies books and other sources. The students may interview a Japanese American who was interned and then write a personal reaction paper, responding to the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II.

GUIDELINE NUMBER SIXTEEN

Students broaden their vocabularies when listening, speaking, reading, and writing with direct assistance by the teacher in learning new words and in learning ways to unlock meaning prior to, during, and after language arts experiences.

"I have learned," said the Philosopher, "that the head does not hear anything until the heart has listened, and that what the heart knows today the head will understand tomorrow."

James Stephens

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

Before reading a selection, the students list, with the help of the teacher, words they would expect to find in a story about a specific subject. For example, if they are

going to read about bears, they would expect to find the words *cub*, *brown*, *woods*, and *den*. After reading, the students discuss the words they encountered, referring to the sentences or situations in which they occurred.

3–6

After the students have read a story, they select words that are new to them. They frame their words on a story chart, and the class reads aloud the sentences in which they appear. The students then define the selected words on the basis of context clues. They write their words in a personal word-book or on cards which they keep in a file as a part of their sight vocabulary. With the help of their teacher and peers, they use these words to build new sentences.

6–8

Before reading aloud a chapter of a novel, the teacher gives the students key vocabulary words that relate to significant events, character development, setting, mood, or theme. The teacher presents the words in the sentence in which they appear in the story. The students infer the meaning in the context and then discuss suggested meanings.

GUIDELINE NUMBER SEVENTEEN

Teachers and library media specialists work cooperatively to provide ongoing instruction regarding the location and appropriate use of information from varied reference materials.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

After sharing with students some of the interesting and varied alphabet books in the library collection, the teacher or library media specialist introduces the concept that alphabetical arrangement is important in library organization and invites the students to see how many places in the library they can find the alphabet being used. Shelf labels in the fiction sections, spine markings on fiction books, labels on the card catalog drawers, volume identification on reference sets, and thumb markings on the dictionary are among the more obvious they may find. During subsequent visits students explore how the alphabet is used to organize information in each of these areas.

3–6

As a follow-up to a classroom lesson on a science concept or historical event, the teacher and the library media specialist guide students to explore the nonfiction section as a source of related factual material. They take students to the shelves, show them a group of books on the topic they were studying, and show them that all have the same or similar numbers on the spine. They repeat the process with another group of books on a different subject and help students to conclude that the numerical arrangement of the nonfiction section facilitates the location of subject-related materials.

6–8

After introducing a new unit of study, the teacher divides the class into groups of five and asks each group to decide on a related topic to research.

The librarian should be an integral part of the instructional staff.

First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America
U.S. Department of Education

In league with classroom teachers, the librarian can foster in children a taste for good literature and a love of serious study.

First Lessons:
A Report on Elementary Education in America
U.S. Department of Education

The students collaborate to develop questions they will research and to design search strategies for finding answers. With the help of the teacher and the library media specialist, the groups do research in the library and prepare written reports, which they present to the class.

GUIDELINE NUMBER EIGHTEEN

Teachers and library media specialists encourage and assist students to use all media and technological resources, such as word processors, computers, library books, films, audiotapes, videotapes, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, as learning and communication tools.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

After introducing a core picture book to students, the teacher, with the help of the library media specialist, plans multimedia experiences that will extend students' understanding and response to the literature. Students may experience an audiovisual presentation (film, filmstrip, sound recording) of the same story and talk about each type of presentation, describing what they see and hear and how each makes them feel.

3–6

The students become familiar with ways of using resources in all media formats and recognize that each medium has unique capacities for presenting information. To focus the students' awareness, the teacher asks them to decide "which medium delivers the best message?" and provides a list of media formats: study print, transparency, audio recording, filmstrip, video cassette/motion picture, magazine, slide, book, and newspaper models. The teacher asks, "Which of the above would you choose if you needed to: Learn to dive? Draw cartoons? Identify bird songs? Find last year's batting average for favorite baseball players?" The students discuss their responses. As a follow-up, students use the library catalog to locate resources on one topic in more than one media format. Students can compare resources and discuss how similar information is presented differently.

6–8

The teacher introduces students to the computer as a technology for storing and retrieving information, using simple computer software programs that help students to understand and use the concepts of database management. The students store short book reviews on computer disks, using either a database or a word processing program. Other students can retrieve this information as an aid in choosing a book to read. Reviews contain short explanations of the contents of the book and personal responses or evaluations.

GUIDELINE NUMBER NINETEEN

All school staff members demonstrate effective communication skills by reading and writing along with and in view of the students and by modeling listening and speaking skills throughout the school day.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

The teacher models how to make a sentence interesting, descriptive, and informative. Using a basic sentence contributed by the students, such as "I have a dog," the teacher demonstrates how to provide additional information. By eliciting from students ideas for more details, the teacher writes on the chalkboard a more complete version of the simple sentence, which might become, "I have a little brown terrier who loves to chase cats and kiss me on the nose." The teacher repeats the process by modeling the development of a new sentence. Working in small groups, the students emulate the process and produce their own similar sentences.

3–6

The teacher, principal, parent volunteers, or other adults frequently provide incentives to read by reading aloud, during class time, a whole book or an exciting part. The teacher encourages students to extend their reading by sharing with them titles or other books by the same author or other books on a similar theme.

6–8

The students and the entire school staff engage in uninterrupted silent reading on a regularly scheduled basis. By reading along with the students, a teacher can provide a model for the students to emulate. Such a program affords the time and a conducive atmosphere for students to develop effective, independent reading habits. The teacher makes available a wide variety of books from which students select individual readings. The librarian acquaints the students with the wealth of materials in the school library.

GUIDELINE NUMBER TWENTY

Teachers encourage parents to become supportive of and involved in the educational program by reading aloud to their children, helping them with their homework, monitoring their use of television and radio, and providing a model in the use of language and in developing positive, lifelong reading habits.

Parents belong at the center of a young child's education. The single best way to improve elementary education is to strengthen parents' role in it, both by reinforcing their relationship with the school and by helping and encouraging them in their own critical job of teaching the young.

First Lessons:
A Report on Elementary Education in America
U.S. Department of Education

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

At an appropriate "stopping place" in the reading or hearing of a longer selection, or at the conclusion of a shorter work, primary students identify an event or build on a story that they especially liked. The teacher reproduces the selected pages for the students to take home and read aloud to or with family members.

3–6

Parents, relatives, or friends of students from various cultures or countries come to the classroom to talk about customs, traditions, climates, ways of life, jobs, education, government, and other topics of interest to the students. If possible, guest speakers bring with them objects which represent different aspects of the cultures represented. They also tell stories representative of their cultures.

6–8

The students use a variety of means to gather information about a topic and then develop a resource book for other students to use. For example, before reading *No Promises in the Wind* by Irene Hunt, the students interview parents and grandparents about what they experienced, heard, or read about the depression in the United States during the 1930s. They look at films and picture books about the time and discuss any current films about the period of time. They listen to songs of the era, such as "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime," and learn vocabulary terms, such as "bread-line," "soup kitchen," and "hobo." Using the information gathered, the students develop a resource book for the school library.

Evaluation of the English–language arts program includes a broad range of assessment methods.

A systematic, ongoing monitoring by educators of students' achievement is enhanced by involving students in the assessment process. The purpose is that students might become more aware of their responsibilities for determining their own progress and need for improvement. The assessment process should include an array of subjective measures of students' achievement. Students must also be aware of the need to maintain their achievement in the use of previously learned concepts and skills. The ongoing process focuses on the assessment of students' abilities in comprehending printed material, particularly in the realms of literature, in using the writing process and developing specific writing skills, in developing listening and oral skills, in developing critical thinking skills, and in understanding the interrelationships of these skills. Programs for assessing students' achievement in the language arts should be determined by the curriculum; such programs should not control the curriculum, but they should grow out of and reflect the agreed-on program of study. Furthermore, assessment programs should not take up excessive classroom time at the expense of instructional time.

Other ways in which the quality of the program can be determined might include the following:

- The extent to which the school staff is cognizant of and makes use of schoolwide data obtained by the California Assessment Program
- Data which reveal how extensively students use the school's library media center
- The degree to which students are cognizant of and involved in the evaluation of their own achievement
- The degree to which parents are cognizant of the evaluation of the program
- Bulletin-board displays of students' writing
- Special awards received by students in competitions such as writing contests
- The quality of services provided to students who have special needs
- The general qualifications of the teaching staff

GUIDELINE NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

Educators, recognizing the limitations of standardized and objective testing, augment the use of such testing and emphasize informal and subjective measures for diagnosis and assessment.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

Each student reads aloud to the teacher on an individualized basis.

Standardized tests have traditionally dealt with the more easily measurable aspects of English instruction, to the neglect of the full range of activities—involving thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that are stressed by English teachers.

Common Sense and Testing in English, National Council of Teachers of English

The teacher determines the level of each student's decoding and comprehension skills by listening carefully and by asking appropriate questions.

3–6

After the entire class completes the reading of a work of fiction or nonfiction or a chapter in a social studies book, students write at least two paragraphs in which they summarize the content of the literary work or the chapter in the book. Using predetermined and previously taught editing techniques, students work in read-around peer-group evaluating teams. Each group reads a selected number of students' papers for appropriateness and completeness of content; for correct usage and syntax; for capitalization and punctuation; and for spelling and handwriting. The teacher selects one or two papers edited by all groups, removes the students' names, and reproduces them or makes transparencies for use in total class review and discussion activities.

6–8

Students work in pairs or small groups to develop both multiple-choice and open-ended questions about a literary selection read by all students in the class. The teacher collates students' items in a test which students take, score, and discuss. Students compare their performance with both types of tests and discuss the results.

GUIDELINE NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

Students develop skills for assessing and monitoring their own performance and progress in the language arts.

Representative enabling activities:

K–3

Each student maintains a folder of writing activities throughout the year, with a variety of kinds of writing selected by the student and the teacher. Periodically, the teacher and individuals or groups review folders and discuss growth in writing skills. Parents also review the folders with students and the teachers. During the year each student may develop a list of writing skills to work on.

3–6

The students meet in small groups to listen to each other read aloud what they have written. In these response groups, the students make constructive suggestions as each piece of writing is read, commenting on things they like or things they would like to know more about. They also engage in peer editing of each other's work.

6–8

Each student maintains a reading log, which includes an individual list of readings. Each log entry has the title of the selection, the name of the author, the name of the illustrator if there is one, the subject area, and a response or evaluation. The students can then judge what types of reading they are doing by subject areas, such as sports, growing up, science fiction, poetry, animals, and mystery. The reading logs can also be taken home or can be used during conferences with parents.

Summary of Guidelines in the English–Language Arts Model Curriculum Guide for Kindergarten Through Grade Eight

California State Department of Education, January, 1987

1. All students at every grade level, including students whose primary language is other than English, receive intensive, directed instruction which helps them to comprehend, respond to, and appreciate significant core works of literature and which helps them to become more fully aware of values, ethics, customs, and beliefs.

2. All students, individually and in small groups, read and respond in a variety of ways to literary works, selected with the help of their teacher, that extend or enhance the classroom study of core works.

3. All students engage in independent reading programs which are tailored to their individual interests, needs, and personalities and which are supported by classroom, school, and community libraries.

4. Students draw on their past and present experiences as they listen, speak, read, and write.

5. Students participate in a variety of activities specifically designed to give them the experiences and knowledge they will need to be effective listeners, speakers, readers, and writers.

6. Students develop oral communication skills through both formal and informal speaking activities.

7. Students learn in meaningul contexts the listening skills they will need to succeed academically, socially, and economically.

8. Students learn and use a variety of reading comprehension strategies and, with the help of the teacher, learn to monitor and adjust their own strategies to better comprehend what they encounter in print.

9. Students learn decoding strategies, including phonics, in a variety of contexts.

10. Students become aware that writing is a means of clarifying thinking and that it is a process which embodies several stages, including prewriting, drafting, receiving responses, revising, editing, and postwriting activities, including evaluation.

11. Students learn the conventions of the English language, including correct usage, grammatical correctness, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, through listening, speaking, reading, and writing and through direct instruction when and if necessary.

12. Students become fluent in handwriting and in the use of equipment, such as word processors and typewriters, through frequent use rather than through isolated penmanship and other drill-type exercises.

13. Students, after having opportunities to build background, write in many different modes of discourse, such as story, observation, biographical sketch, poetry, dialogue, essay, and report.

14. Students experience a balanced program which requires them to listen, speak, read, and write frequently in all subject areas.

15. Students respond both orally and in writing to questions which help them to acquire and use higher-order thinking skills in all subject areas.

16. Students broaden their vocabularies when listening, speaking, reading, and writing with direct assistance by the teacher in learning new words and in learning ways to unlock meaning prior to, during, and after language arts experiences.

17. Teachers and library media specialists work cooperatively to provide ongoing instruction regarding the location and appropriate use of information from varied reference materials.

18. Teachers and library media specialists encourage and assist students to use all media and technological resources, such as word processors, computers, library books, films, audiotapes, videotapes, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, as learning and communication tools.

19. All school staff members demonstrate effective communication skills by reading and writing along with and in view of the students and by modeling listening and speaking skills throughout the school day.

20. Teachers encourage parents to become supportive of and involved in the educational program by reading aloud to their children, helping them with their homework, monitoring their use of televison and radio, and providing a model in the use of language and in developing positive, lifelong reading habits.

21. Educators, recognizing the limitations of standardized and objective testing, augment the use of such testing and emphasize informal and subjective measures for diagnosis and assessment.

22. Students develop skills for assessing and monitoring their own performance and progress in the language arts.

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